

BEARSDEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL



Wednesday 16th September at 7.00 pm
On Teams

Attendees

George Cooper
January Morgan White
Peter Liddle
Stuart Dickson
Katherine Sneedan
Rachel Huston
Tanja Schum

1. Welcome & Apologies

Janice sent her apologies in advance.

2. Introduction from the chair

January welcomed everybody to the meeting.

3. Matters arising

Workshops for parents starting in the next few weeks so Mr Sloan, who will be leading this process, will be in touch with people soon.

4. Pupil performance based on National benchmarks for S5

Mr Cooper and Mr Liddle ran through the recent data on exam results for Nat 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher. This continues to show an improving trend, with key metrics at all-time highs, such as 58.85% of pupils achieving 5+ Highers.

The school has data going back going back to 2007 and there has been continued improvement during this time. The achievement of 5+ Highers in 2009 was 27%, and this has now risen to 58.85%

Bearsden Academy has consistently been amongst the best attainment levels of secondary schools in the state sector in Scotland; however, Mr Cooper was keen to emphasise that the school is not just about statistics or data, it is about nurturing and supporting the young people in their ambitions and ensuring that they always get a chance to fulfil these ambitions. The school looks after them first, and the results follow. Finally, Mr Cooper added his thanks and compliments to the parents who provide such great support to their children.

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January commended Mr Cooper and the school for the results but also thanked the staff for their caring, including those pupils with barriers to learning. Rachel seconded this and said that the school was exceptionally caring – the young people get listened to.

5. Head Teacher report

Parent

- P7 Open Evening event on 10th September – over 400 attendees visited 3 subjects for 25 minute slots. Very positive feedback so far. Universal and targeted transition programme to continue over session. S1 and S3 volunteers acted as guides for the evening, gaining valuable volunteering experience and providing invaluable support to the event.

- Information coming out about S3 parents' night (6th October)
- SQA information evening and S1 information evening details to be shared with parents shortly.
- Gary Sloan will be relaunching the Parent Leadership programme in the coming weeks. Invites for attendees/participants will be sent out next week.

Pupil

- Another successful Fresher's Fair was held at the end of August with dozens of stalls representing sports, science, engineering, languages and many other clubs and Extra-Curricular opportunities at BA.

- The S3 and S4 cohorts for Duke of Edinburgh are chosen and parents met with Miss Chamberlain and Alan Smith (EDC) for a briefing today – the practices and expeditions start in a few weeks.

- Pupil improvement teams continue to help shape the school's work. Miss Welsh is combining Improvement Teams with a refreshed Pupil Council/Parliament to allow pupils to engage in the democratic element of improving their school – this is starting next week.

- Senior Students have started the process of applying to university through UCAS. Early applicants are working towards a mid-October deadline and all others will submit applications by mid-January

Staff

- Inset days used to prepare for session including new improvement teams focused on areas of improvement plan, statutory training for Child Protection, H&S etc, launch of new data tool for helping track wellbeing and support equity, training for digital assessment

- All classrooms received new Promethean boards – pupils will benefit from clearer screens to read information from/watch videos etc. Teachers can utilise new features to support learning.

- Staff-led CLPL cafe programme underway – short sessions in our cafe after school. Eight sessions delivered so far including AI in education, Learning and Teaching (Success Criteria), moderation and outdoor learning.

- Mr Cooper has met with all departments for subject results reviews – all staff share and present in these sessions, looking at the successes in overall attainment, coursework, additional qualifications and patterns in attainment.

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- Principal Teachers are involved in designing their meeting schedule for the year to make sure it has valuable and focused learning and development opportunities
- PTs have met with Ruth Higgins to help continue to develop the curriculum. There is a focus on diversifying the curriculum and building in accreditation of leadership opportunities.
- Leadership Curriculum has been mapped across the school, identifying embedded leadership curriculum planning throughout the BGE and senior phase.
- All staff have been undertaking work on the moderation cycle to help improve standards of experiences/assessment particularly in S1-S3.
- Quality Assurance observations by SLT are underway with 2 departments per week – so far, PSE, English, Maths, Geography and Modern Studies have been covered with Computing, RMPS, Home Economics and Business over the next 2 weeks.
- Staff are working on department improvement plans and related documents as part of ongoing self-evaluation. The school is preparing for a Local Authority review in February – an extra focus for Self-evaluation this year.

Community

- PTA – 1st meeting of the term has taken place – fundraising plan for 25-26 agreed. PTA will support S1 parental engagement evening in October.
- Bearsden cafe launched – 15th September – S6 pupils leading the cafe working collaboratively with volunteering staff from across the school.

6. A report from the Fundraising Group

We received an update on the fundraising group (PTA). The cash balances are healthy, however, given parents and pupils have worked hard to raise this, the priority is now to invest. One focus is the Guidance Base at the school – any one of our children might need this at any point in the future so we wish to make it more welcoming. We would also like to collaborate more with the children. For example, there is a Dungeons and Dragons group at lunchtime and so we've helped fund some starter packs. We would also like to encourage social events in and out of the school. There is also a café, where the pupils will learn from running it, and becoming baristas. They can get a qualification and indeed many of the S6s who have left have been able to get jobs to support themselves. At lunchtime, it is really busy.

We will be supporting the S1 parents through a welcoming evening to get to know them and hopefully secure some volunteers and are currently planning the Christmas Fayre and other events. We will also be doing regular updates on what the money is being used for. We need a new treasurer, and this will be advertised via the school.

January thanked all parents and staff for their support.

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7. Any Other Business

Katherine asked about the use of the social media platform X to share photos of events and so on. Are these shared anywhere else? Could we use a couple of platforms? Mr Cooper confirmed that the preferred method of communication has become Sway which tends to be on the website and pushed regularly via email. There should be at least one sway a term. We are working on a policy around this - some schools use X, Instagram, TikTok, however Sway is likely to remain important. Satchel One is also an option and secure.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was decided that the next meeting would be the Tuesday the 4th of November at 7pm on Teams.